

# Home-Canned Food Holds Many Perils

Each year a number of cases of botulism, the most lethal form of food poisoning, occur. In 1963 a few deaths followed the eating of contaminated food distributed by commercial packers. Modern techniques make this an extremely rare occurrence in relation to the billions of pounds of preserved food consumed in the United States each year, but these accidents served to remind the food industry that the public safety can be maintained only through perpetual vigilance.

## Admission Fees Set By LA Zoo

Admission fees for the new Los Angeles Zoo, which opens Monday, Oct. 17, were established last Thursday by the City Recreation and Park Commission.

Children 11 years of age and under will be admitted free; juniors 12 to 15 years of age, inclusive, will pay 50 cents and adults will be charged \$1.

Commission President Ludlow Flower Jr. and Mrs. Harold C. Morton, the Commission's Zoo Committee, recommended the fee structure which included no charge for educational and handicapped groups.

Tickets purchased in blocks of 100 will be sold at half the regular prices. There will be an additional 15 cent charge for admission to the Children's Zoo for patrons six years of age and over.

Fees for the transportation system within the Zoo will be established at a later date.

clostridium botulinum (botulus is the Latin word for sausage, the food in which the toxin was first demonstrated). The danger does not come directly from eating the bacteria themselves. In fact, a great deal of fresh food contains the spores of the bacteria which, when eaten, pass harmlessly through the digestive tract. However, under special conditions, clostridium botulinum produces a toxin, a substance which may be the most lethal poison in existence. Food canning, if improperly carried out, can provide conditions for the production of this poison.

**THE PROBLEM** of botulism is prevented in commercial canning by use of equipment producing a combination of temperature and pressure capable of killing the spores so they cannot grow into bacteria to produce their toxin. However, since the botulinum bacteria can survive 20 hours of boiling at normal sea-level pressures, simple home canning methods may not succeed in getting rid of them, and during storage there is plenty of time for the fatal toxin to be produced.

Home canning can be carried out safely if certain procedures are carefully followed. These are fully described in the pamphlets "Home Canning of Fruits" and "Home Canning of Vegetables" which are available through University of California Agricultural Extension Service, Berkeley, Calif. A pressure cooking device is recommended for obtaining the combination of temperature and pressure which can kill the botulinum organism during the canning process.

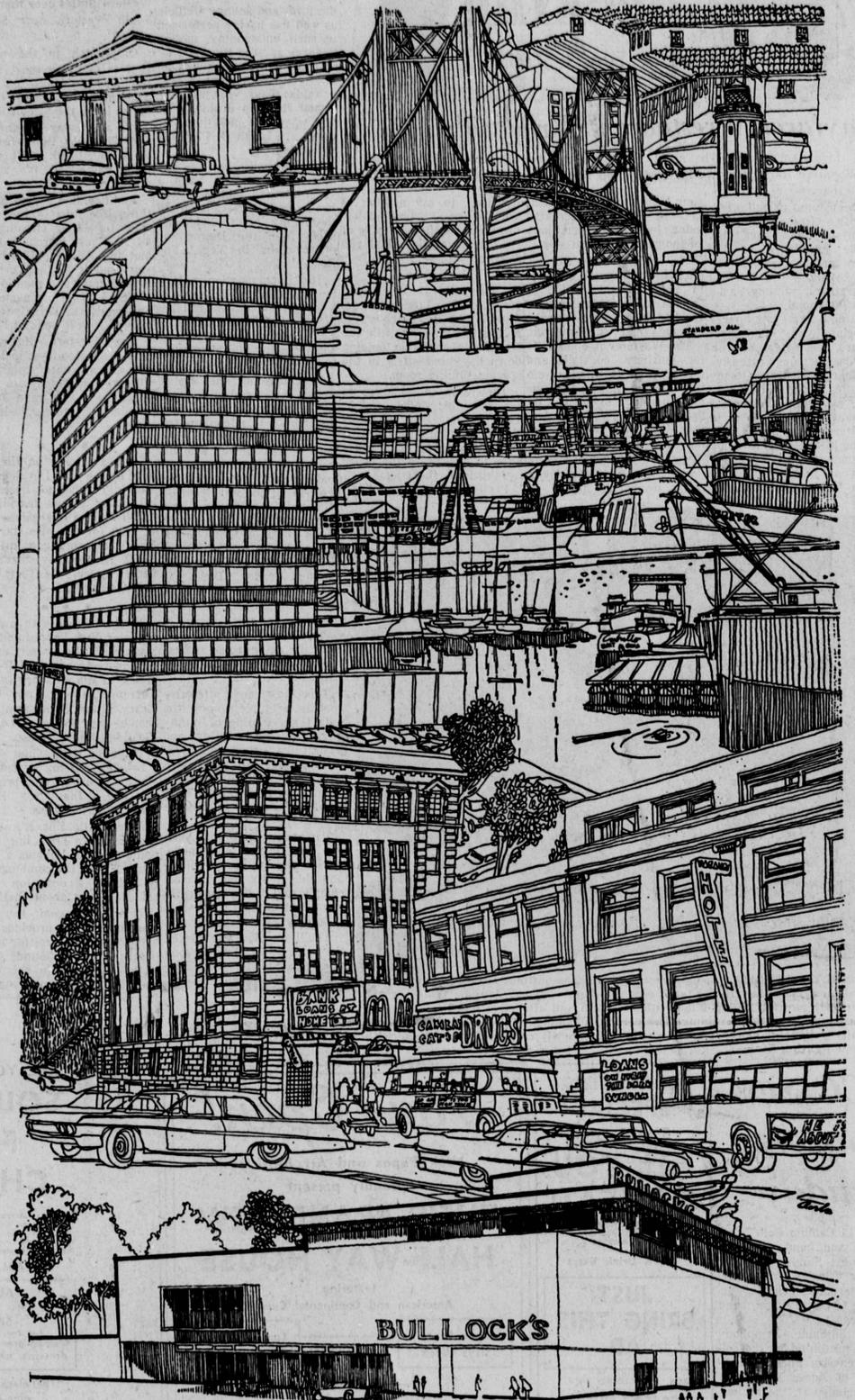
If you have a supply of home-canned food, you can make sure of its safety by one simple precaution—boil before using! Although the bacteria may not be destroyed by boiling, the highly dangerous toxin is made harmless by ordinary boiling—10 minutes at sea level, longer at higher altitudes.

**BOTULISM** kills through the paralyzing action of its toxin upon the nervous system. Control of the muscles is lost, beginning usually with those about the face and neck. Loss of the ability to swallow makes it impossible to eat, leads to choking which may introduce foreign materials into the lungs, and usually produces death in several days. Most patients give a history of having eaten food which tasted spoiled. This may be followed in a few hours by nausea and vomiting from the irritants usually found in spoiled food.

Later the symptoms of muscle weakness begin to appear. If medical aid is quickly obtained, and the correct diagnosis is rapidly made, it may be possible to save the patient. A serum may be injected which, while it cannot help the nerves already damaged, is sometimes able to neutralize a portion of the toxin and limit further paralysis. The speed with which fatal symptoms appear depends largely on the amount of toxin-containing food that is eaten. The first victim to be discovered usually has eaten the most. Others who have eaten the same food, but less of it, can often be protected by antitoxin injections if they can be treated before serious symptoms appear.

**BUT THE BEST** treatment for botulism is prevention. Commercially canned food can be considered safe. If you are given some home-canned food you can make sure it is safe by boiling before using. Those who do their own canning should review their procedure to make certain it protects against botulism, even if they have been canning for years without incident.

Never taste preserved food which appears to have spoiled, for a very small amount of botulism toxin can produce illness. When in doubt, dispose of the food with great care.



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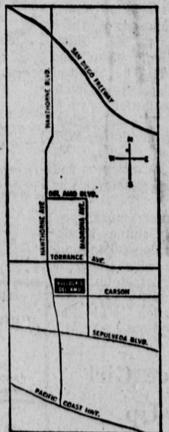
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